

~~Harvard University Ukrainian Studies~~
~~Fund Millennium Series~~
The Millennium of Christianity ...
ADU 3471

The Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine:

The Harvard Project



Harvard University Ukrainian Studies Fund

The Responsibility



The approaching millennium of the Christianization of Rus'-Ukraine in 1988 presents the world-wide Ukrainian diaspora with a unique opportunity — and responsibility: to rediscover, manifest, and safeguard in perpetuity their thousand-year-old spiritual and cultural heritage as a Christian nation.

This responsibility is three-fold. It is an obligation, first of all, to the Ukrainian diaspora itself, for only through a common memory and shared appreciation of their roots can the Ukrainians, scattered over the globe and living among peoples of differing traditions, maintain their ethnic and religious bonds with one another. It is an obligation, secondly, to propagate knowledge of Ukraine's history and the attainments of her Christian culture throughout the world community, which still remains largely ignorant of the Ukrainian experience or wrongly attributes it to other nations. And thirdly, it is an obligation to preserve and ultimately to restore a true and complete record of their own historical and religious legacy to Ukrainians in Ukraine, for the land that gave it birth has been stripped, step by step, of her patrimony by the atheistic and denationalizing policies of the Soviet regime.

The Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute proposes to meet this responsibility and to accomplish this task through a scholarly project, whose achievement, with the support of the Ukrainian community, will endure as a permanent, living monument to Ukraine's Christian Millennium.

The Legacy

Ukraine's conversion to Christianity by St. Volodymyr determined the entire further course of Ukrainian history. Most significantly, it gave the Ukrainians a religious faith and moral system in which subsequent generations found their meaning of existence, guidance to righteous living, solace in suffering, strength in adversity. The Christian faith profoundly affected their family life, social relations, and political philosophy. Christianity and the Ukrainian Churches institutionally played a vital role in the evolution of the Ukrainian national consciousness, during the confrontation with the Muslim Turks and Tatars, and in the long periods of domination by Poles and Russians.

Particularly significant was the catalytic impact of Christianity on the development of Ukrainian culture in all its manifestations. Folk art and customs were permeated by Christian motifs, as best exemplified in the intricate designs of Easter eggs (*pysanky*) and in the richness of Christmas carols (*koliadky*). Places of worship — from the mighty cathedrals of St. Sophia in Kiev and St. George in Lviv to the wooden churches in the remote Carpathian villages — are the most notable specimens of Ukrainian architecture. Painting for centuries was represented almost exclusively by iconography. Music — from the anonymous Kievan chants to the sophisticated compositions of Bortnians'kyi, Vedel' and Berezovs'kyi — drew inspiration from the liturgy and other church services.





But it is in the literary monuments that Ukraine's historical and cultural legacy as a Christian nation is most indelibly preserved, for it is through the written word that each generation passes on its unique experience to the next and ancestors communicate with their descendants of another age. Like other forms of high culture, writing and literature came to Ukraine together with the Christian faith, and were until well into modern times either devotional or thoroughly imbued with a Christian world view and a religious spirit. This literature was extensive and diverse, translated and original, encompassing a wide range of themes, genres and styles. Church service books, prayers, sermons, and lives of saints fulfilled obvious ecclesiastical needs. Chronicles — from the earliest *Tale of Bygone Years*, Kievan and Galician-Volhynian annals of the princely era to the Cossack chronicles of Samovydet's, Hrabianka, and Velychko — provide a record of historical events. Inspired by heroic exploits were such epics as the *Tale of Ihor's Campaign* and the folk *dumy* of the Cossack period. Narrative tales had an old lineage, while verse poetry and drama flowered during the Baroque. Religious controversies of the late sixteenth century generated a voluminous polemical literature, whose sometimes intemperate expressions now pale for the modern reader before his admiration for the authors' religious piety, erudition and many felicities of style.

The Plight

Ukraine's thousand-year-old spiritual and cultural legacy is blessedly rich. But it is still too little known, too little studied, too little propagated — even among Ukrainians themselves. The reasons lie in Ukraine's tragic history. The dawn of modern scholarship in the nineteenth century found the Ukrainians deprived of statehood, native elites, or resources to foster study of their national heritage on the level achieved by more fortunate peoples. Indeed, under the Russian Empire their very existence as a separate people was denied, while the unique achievements of Ukrainian culture became the domain of Russian scholarship, attributed to Russian genius, and so presented to the world: to this day, even Ukrainian scholars must turn for published texts of Ukrainian historical annals to the *Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles*, or, for example, for works of Ukrainian polemicists to the *Russian Historical Library*. The twentieth century brought fresh tribulations. The imposition of Soviet rule added to national oppression and ever-intensifying Russification the element of militant atheism, the liquidation of Ukrainian Churches, destruction of religious monuments, and denigration of Christianity's historic role in Ukraine's cultural development. And even the study of Rus'-Ukraine's early history through the prism of Marxist historical interpretation is still largely the province of Russian scholars in Moscow.

Harvard Project in Commemoration of the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine

The Promise: of the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine

To overcome and compensate the decades of neglect and overt hostility, to unlock and make accessible the treasures of Ukrainian Christian culture, to preserve them for posterity and introduce them to the world community — that is now the urgent task of the Ukrainian diaspora. That is also the goal of the Harvard Project in Commemoration of the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine, which is envisioned in four parts:

1. Monuments of Old Ukrainian Literature. For the first time, the entire corpus of Ukrainian literary works, from the beginning through the eighteenth century, will be published in a scholarly edition to be comprised of three series: 1. works in the original language, where possible in facsimile from manuscripts or early printed editions; 2. translations into English; and 3. translations into modern Ukrainian. Each of the 120 volumes (40 for each series) will include a scholarly introduction, notes and commentaries, and indexes. This part of the project will permanently codify, and help disseminate, the Ukrainian Christian literary legacy.

2. Millennium of Ukrainian Christianity: An Encyclopedic Reference Work. This encyclopedic reference work in three volumes will offer a detailed history of the Ukrainian Churches, their internal characteristics and external forms, all supplemented with maps, portraits, illustrations, bibliographies and indexes. It will be published in Ukrainian and the eight languages of the countries with the largest Ukrainian communities: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, Polish and Russian. This part of the Project will provide a broad synthesis of scholarship on all aspects of Ukrainian ecclesiastical affairs.

3. International Conference in Commemoration of the Millennium of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine. The conference will provide a forum for many of the world's leading scholars to assess and discuss the Christian experience of Rus'-Ukraine, with the proceedings to be published in a special jubilee volume. This part of the Project will push forward the frontiers of knowledge beyond the present vistas attained by earlier scholars.

Commemoration of Christianity in Rus'-Ukraine

4. Chair of Ukrainian Religious Thought at the Harvard Divinity School. The endowment of a chair in Ukrainian religious thought will institutionalize and perpetuate the study of Ukrainian ecclesiastical history and spirituality, support research, and provide for the training of new generations of scholars in the field. At Harvard University, the Chair will benefit from close association with the existing institutions devoted to Ukrainian studies and from the enormous resources of Harvard's library collections. This part of the project will ensure the continued development of scholarship in Ukrainian Christianity far into the second Millennium.

The commemoration of Ukraine's first Millennium as a Christian nation will inspire many celebrations and festivities, undoubtedly necessary to uplift hearts of Ukrainians everywhere. It should also inspire Ukrainians to leave a more abiding monument. Will you help make the Harvard Project such a monument?

Tax-exempt donations for the Millennium project should be made out to Ukrainian Studies Fund.

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The Millennium Series

Booklets now available as part of the Millennium Series:

- From Kievan Rus' to Modern Ukraine: Formation of the Ukrainian Nation.
- Ukrainian Churches Under Soviet Rule: Two Case Studies
- The Ukrainian Catacomb Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II
- Byzantine Roots of Ukrainian Christianity
- Christianization of Kievan Rus'
- Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Josyf Cardinal Slipyj
- The Many Worlds of Peter Mohyla
- Religion and Nationalism in Soviet Ukraine After 1945

This brochure was published by the Ukrainian Studies Fund in conjunction with Millennium of Rus'-Ukraine Christianity Committee. For further information or additional copies please write to:

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